

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please make the following amendments to the specification (material to be inserted in replacement paragraphs or sections is in underline, and material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ or (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) optionally in double brackets [[ ]]).

Please amend the abstract as follows:

Systems and methods related to threaded ~~Threaded~~ connections whereby off-center axial alignment of connected components is maintained, ~~and methods of forming same, are provided.~~ In one embodiment, threads on one connection component are timed to match the timing of the threads on the other connection component. The one component has a connection sleeve screwed thereon. Once the one component and the other component are mated in the desired axial alignment ~~[[and-]]~~ such that the threads on each join to form a continuous, unbroken thread, the connection sleeve is screwed onto the other component to form the threaded connection.

Please amend paragraph [0027] as follows:

FIG. 5A illustrates another embodiment of this invention. In this embodiment, mechanical synchronization of the timings of threads **12** and threads **22** is not required. Instead, first component **10**, having connection sleeve **30** already threaded thereon, and second component **20** are placed in the proper axial alignment, i.e., such that any openings that need to be aligned, are aligned. For example, in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 5A, opening **1** in first component **10** is aligned with opening **2** in second component **20** and opening **3** in first component **10** is aligned with opening **4** in second component **20**. During the connection make-up process, first component **10** and second component **20** are separated, while the alignment of openings **1** and **2** and of openings **3** and **4** is maintained, until the distance between first component **10** and second component **20** (the "required distance") is such that if threads **12** and threads **22** were

continuous through the required distance, they would form a continuous-thread path between first component **10** and second component **20**. Proper alignment of the openings between component **10** and component **20** can be provided using alignment pins, or nipples **6** and nipple recipients **7**, that mate between the components, e.g., through openings **1** and **2** or through openings **3** and **4**, as illustrated in FIG. 1 - 3. The required distance between first component **10** and second component **20** may be maintained by a spacer. For example, a spacer **26** may be placed between components **10** and **20** such that a first end of spacer **26** abuts mating face **14** of component **10** and a second end of spacer **26** abuts mating face **24** of component **20**. In this example, spacer **26** is a suitable piece of metal, as will be familiar to those skilled in the art. The spacer 26 may be sized to space the first and second components by a desired stand-off separation distance 28. In another embodiment, ~~[[also ]]~~illustrated in FIG. 5B, a spacer **27** is adjustable and is in the form of a screw. A threaded end **27b** of a spacer **27** is screwed into component **20** via mating face **24** until the proper stand-off separation distance ~~[[28 ]]~~ **29** is achieved as shown, and a top end **27a** of spacer **27** abuts mating face **14** of component **10**. In some implementations ~~an alternative embodiment, referring now to~~ and as illustrated in FIG. 5B, an indentation **24a** is provided in component **20** at mating face **24**. ~~In this embodiment, a threaded end 27b of a spacer 27 is screwed into component 20 via mating face 24 until the proper stand-off separation distance 29 is achieved as shown, and a top end 27a of spacer 27 abuts mating face 14 of component 10.~~ In some embodiments, the this embodiment, stand-off separation distance **29** ~~is preferably~~ may be equal to the distance of one thread pitch or less. Once the required distance is maintained, connection sleeve **30** is threaded from first component **10** to second component **20**. In yet another embodiment, the connection can be made up without a spacer by physically moving component **20** axially away from component **10** until the required distance is achieved and connection sleeve **30** is threaded from first component **10** to second component **20** at least until the threads of sleeve **30** engage with the threads on component **20**. Other embodiments, either using a

spacer or not, to generate the required distance are within the scope of this invention. Once the required distance is maintained, connection sleeve **30** is threaded from first component **10** to second component **20**. The required distance between mating faces **14** and **24** can range from zero to several thread pitches. Any or all parts of a connection according to this invention may be coated with a suitable coating to provide protection from galling and/or corrosion, as will be familiar to those skilled in the art.